

The Seventh Seal

Dark-Wave/Gothic Magazine
Issue no 3,
Featuring: Star Industry, Mantra,
Ash Neutral,
Penitent

EDITORIAL

Hello again. Welcome to Issue 3 of The Seventh Seal. Apologies for the missing 'Last Trumpet' news addition in this zine, but there is so much else here and your editor simply cannot go over the magic number of 40 due to financial constraints. Normal service will, however, be resumed in the next issue....

No doubt everyone has heard about what happened at Leipzig - you can read about my report on the event here.

Please bear in mind that one or two of the items in this edition are definitely of an 'adults only' nature, so if you are of delicate sensitivities, and are easily offended by strong written material - then be warned, and stay away this time round. Contributions in the form of reviews, artwork and stories are still very welcome for future issues, and so of course, are COS, news, books or other zines for reviewing.

The Seventh Seal costs two pounds or the equivalent in any other hard currency in note form, plus IRC; back issues are available for just £1.50. Once again, please forward all inquiries/letters/info to

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Poison Quill



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INTERVIEW WITH STAR INDUSTRY



Star Industry are an engaging band from Belgium, who seem to have a talent for producing classic goth dancefloor hits. The Poison Quill decided it was time to get to know them a little better, and to ask them something about their forthcoming new release...

My first question is - I see you have cited many influences on your site, but you have not mentioned The Merry Thoughts (many pardons if you have, and I did not notice). Surely this has to be some kind of an oversight?....

In October '98, Peter said the following about TMT: "Great band! Well-structured songs. They have brought gothic to me again. I saw them some time ago in Merchtem. Their concert has brought a special feeling to me, not that the concert was that good, but... I just don't think that comparing Star Industry with Merry Thought or even The Sisters is something that fits. Maybe a part here and there, but personally I don't think we sound very much like them. Maybe 'Nineties' is the closest to them. People do know 'Nineties' which makes them compare us more with them, I think. Every band is compared to the bigger bands and after a while other bands are compared to you... Some even compared us with Suspiria or Dreadful Shadows... Never thought about that before!"

Most people say that TMT are inspired by the Sisters, and some people say the same about us. We are definitely Sisters fans and we have nothing against The Merry Thoughts, but we don't see them as an influence or one of our favourite bands.

The Merry Thoughts have always been considered to be Sisters clones. How would you react, if this criticism were to be levied at you?

It happens every now and then, you know. We are obviously influenced by the Sisters, but we think we have our own sound and identity and we hope that the listeners can hear that. The Sisters of Mercy isn't our *only* influence after all! We have lots of different favourite artists within the band and we take our music seriously.

Did you consciously set out to be a gothic band, if you consider yourselves that, or is it just something that happened?

It's just something that happened... but we like the gothic audience, as it's a very loyal one. We do of course wish for our music to reach anyone that might like it, no matter what sort of music camp they see themselves as belonging to. We make music for anyone who likes a good and danceable tune with some content as well.

OK, I know you must regularly update your site for this information, but for the sake of readers of my zine, can you tell me more about the new release you have planned? How much of a development is it from your earlier album?

When is it due for release? What will the title be?

There's not that much we can tell you about it for the moment. But we're working hard on it whenever there's time. One thing's for sure though, there will be a strong guitar sound and a lot of electronic stuff like samples and loops. We have developed the sound from our first album... so of course it will be powerful and danceable.

I understand you have a new drummer. Did you have a real one before, or just a machine? Can you please introduce yourself, drummer?

The albums are recorded with a computer as we like the clean sound of it for the studio, but when it comes to concerts we prefer the rougher sound as well as the visual aspect of a real drummer. Our new drummer is called Kurt, but he's not here with us right now... but if you're interested you can check out his profile on our Internet site. A guy called Marc used to be our drummer before Kurt, but he wanted to do other things musically, so he left the band. We are all still friends though.

I see you have been to many venues across Europe - Vamps and Tramps, Leipzig and so forth. In which countries do you most like to play, and which countries would you most like to visit, if you could.

We play the most in UK and in Belgium, so obviously we like playing there. It would be fun to play in other countries outside Europe as well, like America or South Africa... We're very interested in other cultures so getting the chance of playing in countries we would like to visit would be great. Although there's not that much time for sightseeing when you have a show to prepare.

What is Belgium like for the music scene?

Belgium has a weird music scene with only a couple of "goth" festivals like Eurorock and Black Easter. If we need to recommend some band we'd say Front 242 (do they need an introduction!) and maybe Soulwax. But Belgians can be a weird people. Any band

from the UK, US or Germany is automatically considered to be good. But if you're from Belgium, it's a whole other thing. You really have to prove a lot. It's a shame, but it's the only way to go.

What is behind your choice of name?

We didn't find the band's name in a book or movie or so... but it's our own creation. It certainly has a strong meaning to us but it's up to people to let their *own* fantasy work around it.

Are you idealists in any particular way?

What do you think might make the world a better place in the future?

All of us are interested in other cultures, as well as social and political matters. But there's no direct or predominant philosophy or ideal behind the music. The music is open for the listeners' own ideas and impressions.

We don't like extremities in any kind of way, so if people could learn to be more tolerant towards each other and everything that's "different", it would be a great step towards a better world. We are not party political, but we care a lot about society and social matters, as you probably have seen in our lyrics.

People basically have to be more open-minded and care less about the concept of MONEY!

What is the favourite book/film of each member in the band, and why?

We like film directors such as David Lynch, Quentin Tarantino and Lars von Trier. Some films we can come up with right now are "Wild at Heart" and "Natural Born Killers"...

We don't have the time to read as much as we would like, but Bret Easton Ellis is a favourite and Peter likes writers like Stephen King and he admires Boudewijn de Groot. Apart from that we don't have any "number one favourite" books or films.

You can learn more *Star of Industry* by visiting their website at
<http://users.skynet.be/starindustry/>

Gig Reviews

Gotik Treffen, Leipzig, June 00

Well, what can I say? Slow, painful death probably isn't good enough whoever who ran off with the gate takings - thus depriving all those who made the expensive journey to Leipzig the opportunity to see their favourite bands live on the third day. (I do not know the whys and wherefores of what happened exactly, but it is to be hoped that this is kind of let-down not going to become a habitual event, in Leipzig or anywhere else.) To say nothing of the horrendous organisation, already apparent on the first day. Why for example, did we who had already purchased our tickets, have to wait for more than three hours in the queue, in order to get our bands. Why was the Corvux Cora gig delayed by one day, then the next, then the next again, thereby making it impossible to plan anything concrete and missing other bands I would also have very much liked to see?



Don't mess with us... (sorry guys for not asking to use this photo, but you did look So good in it...)

I did get to see Love is Colder than Death and Nightspell on the first night - which for me at least, were actually more powerful and atmospheric live than from a puny CD player. Both these bands were a treat for me. I did not actually get to see Lacrimosa - Tilo Wolf was clearly not a happy man when I met him earlier at the press conference, convinced that the gig would not go ahead (sounds familiar?)

Well, luckily that did; reportedly it went on for four hours, was claustrophobic because of the large audience, and very much in the new style, i.e. very full-frontal and metally. So those who like Lacrimosa's earlier, more introspective stuff, would have been disappointed.

Meanwhile, the Nightbreed umbrella could be easily heard, even from outside on the grass (which was a more agreeable place in which to take things in anyway); I could discern the vomiting vocals of Midnight Configuration at one point, whilst Killing Miranda also seemed to give a good account of themselves.

The next day, I was told that the Polish Fading Colours gave an excellent performance, so was disappointed to have missed them; ditto for the likes of Theatre of Tragedy.

I did catch some of the Das Ich gig on the ill-fated Sunday, and can safely say that they were energetic; however, the crowded rush to the exits at the end kept bringing Hillsborough to mind, at least for me. Before that, a group of us had lodged in a very crowded medieval building, where reedy medieval music was played (though not, alas, the fabled Corvux Cora), along with medieval entertainment, and medieval jewellery, etc. All very atmospheric, but still not what we had originally wanted to see. Later, a gig hastily took place elsewhere in this labyrinthine building, which was reputedly some centuries' old; it may have been Dreadful Shadows, and featured Mantra-vocals, from posturing girl with a faint resemblance to Kate Bush, but a voice that was sometimes out of tune.

The clothes stores were well-stocked, yet somehow what was available seemed limited; for example, I was looking for some common-or-garden leggings, but could find none; also there seemed to be a certain lack of quality on what was available. I was told by another festival-goer that there had been less for sale the year before, but the quality of the clothes had been much higher.

There was an interesting art exhibition in what looked like a dilapidated warehouse, not far from the so-called Denkmal, with some whimsically gothic drawings, paintings, etc.

There was an enormous variety of music promised at the festival, including electro and metal. It was suggested to me by a local before the worst happened, that the Treffen had become far too unwieldy by now, and should scale down in the future. (According to Sanctuary, a scaling down is exactly what will in fact happen next year. Bet they won't offer discount tickets to those of us who lost out this time round, though.)



Disappointed concert goers

I at least, never got the CD that I understood comes as part of the ticket. What a bummer. All in all, it seems as though a good many recommendations are in order, regarding the planning of future events and festivals such as Leipzig, in order to avoid disappointments like this in the future.

MOONSPELL, 2000 23. JANUÁR PESCA

A koncert ismertetése előtt az új, tavaly, megjelent lemezről szólnék pár szót. Ismerem a bandát, nekem elsősorban a 'wolfheat' és az 'irreligious' jött be. Nos, itt az új album és feltűnő újítások történik de az anyag így is Moonspell stílusú. Modern stílusú sampler, hangzásokat enyhén szállós effektek elegyíti a további ill. Első 1-2 lemez sívítós-ívöltös éneztémaival, duplo-lábdos, beindulós számokkal számrészekkel. Az összehatás mégsem emészthetetlen - ezt persze vannak akik fenntartással fogadják - és ez a koncerten megmutatkozott. Én, magam részéről, nem vagyok ellene a gyökeres újításoknak ha az nem jár stílusváltással. Végeredményben egy modern hangzású dark-metal album született meg.

Mintegy 7-8000 ember gyűlt össze és lázasan figyelték az előkészületeket. A díszlet nem volt valami nagyon monumentális de azért nagyban hozzájárult a show látvány magasságát leereszkedő fémpókok voltak, lábaik végén a fényszórókkal melynek színei éppen az adott szám által ihletett hangulatokhoz alkalmazkodtak. Az intro után az új album egyik legerősebb számával a 'Soulstick' kezdtek. Egy olyan 3-4 számmal az új lemezről felhangzottak a régi jól bevált 'Eurotica' aztán majd a 'Butterfly Effect' és sin/Pacado slágerei váltották egymást. A koncert közepére érkeztek a régi bevált nóták Opium, Aurora. Mephisto stó és ezután a boszorkányt még báross fortlyogott és az igazi kitörést a finále és a ráaddá számhoz hozzák meg - Ruin and Misery, of Dream and Dram (Midnight Riot), Alma Mater and Vampiria. A régi számokat eredeti állapotukban adják elő nem az új stílusban. A zenekar jó hangulatban volt, nyitottok voltak, a koncert végén felé a szokásos integetések kézfogások, dobölők behajigulása stb. Az énekes Fernando pedig végig fáradhatatlanul celebrálta a rockmisét. Ahogy én láttam mindenki jól elvult másoknak inkább a koncert második felé, a régi számok hozták meg a totális tombolást. Valahogy így talán mindenki elégedetten távozhatott. Mindenesetre számomra egy nem mindennapos dolgot adott a Moonspell.

Before reviewing the concert, I would like to make a few comments about last years' new release. I got to know the band in the first place through 'Wolfheat' and 'Irreligious', which went down well with me. Now, here is the new album and the excellent innovations are byones. But the material is thus in Moonspell's style. The sounds of the modern-style sampler are blended with lightly vaulting effects from the first two records onwards, with screaming, howling vocals and double-edged percussion, full-frontal tracks with interludes. The overall effect is by no means indigestible - though of course there were many who hold reservations, and who expressed these reservations at the concert. I, for my part, however, am not prejudiced against radical innovations if these do not change the overall style. In my opinion, a modern-sounding dark-wave album had been born.

Something like 7-800 thousand people gathered together and watched the preparations in great anticipation. The set was not especially monumental, but the atmosphere and power of the show was greatly enhanced by means of the inspired use of strobe lighting, coming from the criss-cross of metal tubing which looked down on the main platform; from

these, the whole spectacle was bathed in deep colour at the point of certain given numbers. After the introduction, the gig began with the strongest tracks from the 'Soulsick' album. Three or four numbers from the old, tried and trusted Eurotica album were then belted out, afterwards hits from the albums 'Butterfly Effect' and sin/Pecodo were played alternately. In the middle of the concert the old, familiar numbers 'Opium' 'Aurora' and 'Mephisto' were played and after that the sorcery was still seething on; a real eruption of a finale and came when they returned for the encore, giving us 'Ruin and Misery' 'of Dream and Dreams' (midnight riot), 'Alma Mater' and 'Vampiria.' The old numbers were played in their original format, and not with the new style on the new CD. The band was in a good mood, they were open, and towards the end of the concert, there was the customary shaking of hands, stamping of feet, surge to the front, etc. The singer Fernando also tirelessly celebrated the rock mass. Thus I saw everybody respond incomparably better during the second half of the concert, the old numbers were performed to a standing ovation. Somehow, perhaps everybody went away satisfied. In any case, for my part Moonspell did not give a bad performance at all.

Mezey Gábor

The Cure: Vienna 11 4 00

According to rumours, this was reputedly the last tour the Cure will ever make, so I was glad to get the opportunity to see them live at last.

The concert began reasonably on schedule, and opened with the first two tracks from the new album, Bloodflowers (which I reviewed in SS2). The band then launched into material from the Disintegration albums, Wish (presumably; I never got Wish) - and as the concert progressed, from even earlier material, from 17 Seconds and even Pornography.

It all went down very well with the audience, who lapped it up. And Robert Smith lapped up the appreciation of the audience, the charisma of the man most discernible in his very expressive eyes. His glance seemed to take in whole sections of the audience, even individuals, so it seemed, in a highly intimate way. Maybe if he is really retiring from the grind of being a popstar, he should take up politics.

He was chubby rather than fat, much like a faintly dissolute Roman emperor. The largeness of his personality seemed to eclipse those of the other members of the band, who stoically played on with all the professionalism you might expect of a band that has been in existence for more than 20 years; there were some catcalls from the audience for Simon Gallup too, though.

The venue was crowded, though not claustrophically so. Before the show, some reporters brusquely pushed their way through the audience, looking for likely specimens to photograph and question.

The main part of the gig concluded with 39 and Bloodflowers. Encores duly followed, with Robert apparently in an introspective mood for some of the solo numbers he delivered. Eventually the main lights came on, when it was time for everyone to go home, and that was it. A very satisfying performance, retrospective in that it did seem to be a summing up of what the Cure have done overall within the entire span of their career. I wonder why he didn't actually do 'Killing and Arab' too.



THE PRINCESS OF THE RED LILIES

by Jean Lorrain

Translated from the French by Brian Stableford

And now, once more from Brian Stableford, who has been a regular contributor to The Seventh Seal, here is something he has put together just for us, entitled NIGHTMARES OF A ETHER-DRINKER. It was first published in 1894. It was the first in a series of Decadent mock-fairy tales that Lorrain wrote between that date and 1899, most of which were collected in PRINCESSES D'IVOIRE ET D'IVRESSE.

There was a cold and austere child of kings. Scarcely sixteen years old, she had the grey eyes of an eagle set beneath raised eyebrows, and her skin was so white that one might have thought that her hands were made of wax and her face of pearl. Her name was Audovere. The daughter of an old warrior king, who was always occupied in distant conquests when he was not defending the borders of his realm, she had grown up in a convent, among the tombs of the kings of her race. She had no memory of her mother or her birth; she spent her early childhood in the charge of the nuns.

The convent in which she had spent the sixteen years of her life was situated in the shady silence of a secular forest. Only the king knew the path that led to it, and the princess had never seen the face of any man other than her father. It was a harsh place, hidden from highways and by-ways alike; nothing penetrated its depths but the wan sunlight that filtered through the dense overarching foliage of the oaks.

At vespers, Princess Audovere sometimes went outside the convent wall and strolled at a leisurely pace, escorted on either side by two groups of nuns, each in single file. She was serious and thoughtful, as if she were oppressed by the weight of a secret trust, so pale that one might have thought that she would soon die. A long robe of white wool, its hem embroidered with large gold trefoils, hung down to her feet. A light veil of blue gauze fastened to a circlet of engraved silver about her head subdued the shade of her blonde hair. Audovere was as blonde as lily-pollen, and her lips were slightly paler than the ruby-red of old altar vases.

And that was her life. Patiently, with her heart full of hopeful joy--as another woman might have awaited the return of her intended bridegroom-- she waited in the convent for the return of her father, the king. Her favourite pastime was to devote her thoughts to imagine the battles he fought, the perils he endured, the armies he commanded and the princes he massacred in the wake of his triumphs. In April, the surrounding slopes were covered with primulas. In autumn, they were bloodstained by bare clay and fallen leaves. And in April as in October, as eager in June as in November, always cold and pale in her white woollen robe embroidered with gold trefoils, Audovere walked beneath the green or russet oaks, in perpetual silence.

In summer, she would sometimes pick the great white lilies that grew in the convent garden; she was so frail and white herself that she might have been taken for their sister. In autumn, it was the foxgloves that she twirled between her fingers--purple foxgloves plucked at the edges of

forest glades--and the sickly pink of her lips came to resemble the wine-redness of the flowers. Strangely enough, she never pulled the petals off the foxgloves, although she kissed them often, as if mechanically; on the other hand, her fingers seemed to take pleasure in shredding the lilies. A cruel smile would then draw her lips half-open. It was as if she were performing some obscure rite--as if her actions corresponded, after the fashion of a distant echo, to some dark and bloody ceremony that was happening elsewhere.

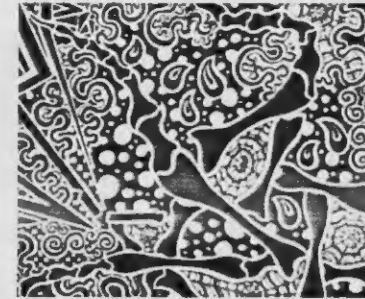
Which, in fact, they did. Each gesture of the virgin princess was connected to the suffering and death of a man. The old king knew that perfectly well. He was in distant possession of the eyes and the baleful virginity hidden in that unknown convent. The complicit princess knew it too: hence her smile, when she kissed the foxgloves or crushed the lilies slowly between her beautiful fingertips. Each lily spoiled was the corpse of a prince or a young warrior killed in battle, each foxglove kissed an open wound, a gaping cut giving vent to the heart's blood. Princess Audovere no longer kept count of her distant victories. In the four years that she had been fully aware of her charm, she had become ever more prodigal in lavishing her kisses on the poisonous red flowers and increasingly ruthless in her destruction of the guileless lilies. Giving death with a kiss and taking life with an embrace, she was her royal father's mysterious executioner and funeral aide-de-camp. Every evening the chaplain of the convent, an old blind Barnabite, heard her confession and absolved her of her sins--for the sins of royalty only work to the damnation of the common people, and the odour of cadavers is incense at the foot of the throne of God. The Princess Audovere was devoid of remorse or sadness. No sooner was she made aware that absolution had purified her than death-rattles sounded in the fields of battle and the nights of destruction and severed limbs were brandished at the red sky. Princes, mercenaries and beggars offered up their pleas for mercy to proud virgins, but virgins do not react to blood with the anguished horror of mothers--mothers forever trembling for their much-loved sons--and Audovere was, above all else, her father's daughter.

One night, having reached the unknown convent by some freak of chance, a wretched fugitive beat on the door of the holy shelter, crying like a baby. He was drenched in sweat and black with dirt and his wretched body was bleeding from seven wounds. The nuns took him in, cleaned him up and lodged him among the tombs in the crypt, more out of fright than pity. A pitcher of iced water was placed beside him so that he might slake his thirst, along with a sprinkler of holy water and a crucifix, to ease the passing of his sinful life--for he was already at his last gasp, his breast congested by the onset of his final anguish. At nine o'clock, in the refectory, the superior recited the prayer for the dead on the wounded man's behalf and the nuns, somewhat distressed, returned to their cells. Then the convent fell asleep. Audovere alone remained awake, thinking about the fugitive. She had scarcely caught a glimpse of him as he crossed the garden, supported by the arms of two aged sisters and a single thought obsessed her: the agonised man was undoubtedly an enemy of her father, some deserter who had escaped a massacre, a cowardly and panic-stricken derelict run aground at last at the convent.

The battle must have taken place in the neighbourhood, much closer than the nuns suspected, and the forest must at that very moment be full of other runaways. An entire host of bleeding, whimpering wretches, suffering and pustulous, with stumps where arms and legs once were, would be laying siege to the convent walls by dawn, waiting to receive the charity of the nuns.

It was the middle of July, and the long flowerbeds were perfumed by lilies. Princess Audovere went downstairs and across the garden, advancing upon the tall moonlight-bathed stems, upstanding in the night like moist spears--and she began, slowly, to strip the petals from the flowers.

But the flowers, by some mystical means, exhaled sighs and emitted death-rattles, weeping and pleading. Beneath the pressure of her fingers, the petals acquired the texture and resistance of flesh. Something warm fell upon her hands, which she took at first for tears, and the scent of the lilies, strangely transformed, suddenly became disgusting, heavy and insipid. It was as if their cups were full of noxious incense.



Although she was near to fainting, Audovere stuck to her task, continuing her murderous work, decapitating the calyces without pity, shredding the corollas without respite--but for every flower that was cut down, more than one was regenerated, and the host became innumerable. There was now an entire field of tall rigid flowers, sprouting in a hostile manner beneath her feet: a veritable army of four-petalled pikes and halberds blooming in the moonlight. Desperately weary but gripped by a vertiginous destructive rage, the princess went on and on shredding, murdering, pulverising everything before her, until a strange vision stopped her in her tracks.

From a spray of taller flowers, bluishly translucent, the cadaver of a man emerged. With his arms extended as if on a cross and his feet clenched one atop the other, he displayed in the darkness the wounds in his left side and his bleeding hands. There was a crown of thorns splattered with mud and pus about his head. The frightened princess recognised the wretched fugitive who had been taken in that same evening: the wounded man dying in the crypt.

He raised a swollen eyelid painfully, and cried out in a reproachful voice: "Why have you struck me? What have I done?" Princess Audovere was found dead the following day, eyes upturned, with lilies between her hands and pressed to her heart. She lay across a pathway at the entrance to the garden--but all the lilies around her were red.

They never produced white flowers again. Thus died Princess Audovere, of having breathed the scent of lilies by night, in a convent garden in July.

INTERVIEW WITH ASH NEUTRAL



I first heard about Ash Neutral after listening to one of their tracks on the 'Edge of Night' compilation, from Russia. Ash Neutral already have two CD's of their particular brand of melancholic gothic/industrial music available. Ash kindly agreed to answer my questions.

First things first. How did Ash Neutral meet, form, and what is the line-up now?

Ok, Neutral was formed in 1994 as an industrial project, I did bass and vocals. Music was a la Treponem Pal/Godflesh/ Head of David. The same year first demo " When Angels are Neutral" was released.

Then there were many gigs in Moscow clubs, several compilations etc. In 1995 due to growing misunderstanding concerning further musical progress with the other band members, the original Neutral collapsed. Some time later I met Ilya Lipkin (guitarist) and in 1996 we together recorded our first album "The Dream that Destroys the Dreamer." (I did bass, vocals, keys and samples). The music became more "gothic", but full of industrial elements. Later on, other members joined the band and now Neutral are:

ASH - vocal

Ilya Lipkin - guitars, mandolin

Shelley - guitars

Eugene Voronovsky - violin, piano

Yann - drums & percussion

Wolfsblood -webmaster, photographer, poet and a very good person:)

I want to ask you about the macabre drawings on your site - what is the story behind those? Have you any more work in the pipeline?

Well, if you mean those pale creatures, I created them in my mind after reading Clive Barker stories, and Ilya then created the whole world of them. Mine were just general idea and some

plot and environment suggestions, all the rest Ilya did. If you want you can call them " pale face of Neutral" ..kind of talisman maybe.. Ilya is continuing working on different plots on this theme. (By the way, feel free to print any of his works in your 'zine, if you wish to (I may just take you up on that...ed)

I now see that you have two or three releases, and most interesting these look too - can you tell SS readers how they can get hold of these? Direct from you, or from the Coroner?

All our releases will be soon available through our new site at www.woods.ru. It will open in a week or two. There will be an English version, distribution page and all useful info. This will be not only Neutral site, we are trying to form a community including the most interesting bands in Russia dealing with darkfolk and based on "nature" spirit such as Romowe Rikoito, Kratong, Theatre of Poison. I Hope it will be interesting to all who share these views.

Have you met the Coroner, and what is his role in Russia?

Of course I have. We took part in several Russian Gothic Project activities (some gigs, " Edge of the Night "compilation, etc). But the thing is that we are not a "gothic" band within the common understanding of this term. We are not interested in image/makeup/vampiric clothes-and-all-this-"true-gothic"-stuff. The Coroner does a lot of work trying to do something about gothic in Russia and this work is useful for all those interested in such things in our country. So, regarding the Coroner, nothing but respect from me. Sometimes our paths cross and we even go together.

Can you tell me a little more about how things are in Moscow? Clubs, bands, etc?

The same thing as in other parts of the country. No special goth clubs, two-three bands. Sub-culture boiling inside itself. It is not a problem to play in Moscow, but it will be in an ordinary club, sometimes even not meeting the requirements of a good concert. Speaking about the scene I know, I can say that there is an "Industrial time" now in Moscow. Lots of bands, gigs etc. Certain progress, I must admit. When Neutral played industrial this scene was even smaller than the gothic scene nowadays.

A lot of what you say about being unable to play outside Moscow sounds familiar, sounds a lot like the situation in Budapest. Do you not think it forces people to draw on their own resources more, or would you say it causes envy?

If I understand you correctly, you mean financial resources? Well, for example speaking about our first tour to Koenigsberg, we paid all travel expenses, but we had the opportunity to do it. If you have such a possibility all other things do not really matter. What is really important that you can play outside your micro-world, make different interesting, sometimes very important contacts, your music can be heard live in other parts of the country/world. As for envy, I do not know such a feeling (smile).

What were your earliest influences, music-wise, and how did you first learn about goth?

Well, the earliest was heavy metal (mostly Voivod), then industrial (Treponem Pal, Throbbing Gristle, Clock DVA, SPK, Godflesh,GGFH), later Current 93, Sol Invictus, DIJ, OES, Fire+Ice, the Pogues, some of Irish folk. Gothic for me began with Dead Can Dance " Within the Realm of Dying Sun" and "The Serpent's Egg". It was 1993 when I first heard them. I never knew about goth culture as it is, before I met Coroner and Wolfsblood, but what I've learned about it, I didn't like it mostly. I feel close to World Serpent apocalyptic folk (i.e. In Gowan Ring etc.) and other dark folk bands.

Would you describe your own music as morbid or depressive in any way, and do you think that the depressive attitude is somehow more honest or true to life than a happy-happy approach to life?

Not really. If in 1994-96 I could agree that the music was really depressive, now I must say that our music is filled more with sorrow, but it became "lighter" if I can say so. As for attitude to life, the most important thing to my mind is not to fall into extremes. When you start to see only the dark side of life you start not to see its bright side and visa versa. The depressive approach is an extreme and a happy attitude is an extreme also. The most honest approach to life is a realistic approach. Everything must be balanced.

I see that there is an awareness of the Chechnya issue alive in your lyrics. How would you say most of your compatriots feel about that issue? Have you known people who have fought there, and what is your view on what is happening there?

Well, not exactly. I've just used the voices of the hostages taken by Chechen terrorists in Russian town Budenovsk as samples to enforce the feeling of reality in the song "A Small Piece of Reality" on "The Dream..." There are no songs dedicated exactly to the Chechen crisis. Speaking about this problem, I can say that people are tired of all this, every day people die there, mothers are afraid for their sons to be sent there. The feeling well-known to all countries passed through any military conflicts. I know some people who've been there, but if you excuse me I'd like not to talk about my personal view on this problem.

Do you think that human nature can ever really change?

The thing is what to call human nature. If it is the attitude to what is going on, it is changing throughout the history of mankind. Evolution, technological progress is changing the mankind. On the other hand, if the human nature is to do with basic instincts, such as the instinct to survive, it can hardly be changed. It can be suppressed by comfort, social and technological excess, it can even be eliminated by the same means - which will lead to the death of all mankind, but it can hardly be changed, be in different forms. But, who knows what mankind will be like in further centuries...if there will be any mankind...

What is the main message that you wish to convey through your music, or is it for you a form of art, where you simply hold up a mirror towards what is going on?

The only message is to make people think. To think of what is inside them and/or outside them. Of course, different events, emotional feelings are reflected in our music, but music is a collective work, and everyone brings in his own part of such emotions. I mostly speak about the things important to me in the lyrics.

If you could travel anywhere you wanted, which countries would you go to, and why?

England and Ireland first. Being in Devon and Cornwall in 1994, I experienced a real strike in my very soul for Nature, the Spirit of the Past, the Breath of this ancient land. Incredible feeling, you know... Something in common I feel visiting ancient Russian towns such as Vladimir, Novgorod The Great etc., but this is the feeling I was raised with, so in England it was new and that's why stronger. I think in Ireland it could be even more powerful. Then Prague - a very beautiful city, Scandinavian countries for their Viking past... Australia - do not know exactly why, I suppose it is a very nice place to visit...but pretty far and expensive:)))

So that's it. Hope you are not disappointed.

CUBICLE ONE

After a few minutes of sitting in the waiting room, Darren knew that once again, he was fooling himself; he WAS nervous. The hand that was holding the second, puny roll-up to his mouth, was shaking; he could not bring himself to flick through the lavish, glossy leaflets in front of him, on the table which was screwed to the floor. The leaflets all promised him a varied, exciting future, if only he had the wherewithal to decisively reach for it.

He allowed his eyes to scan the other clients whose place preceded him in the queue, who slouched disconsolately in the chairs that shared his table (likewise, these were also, firmly screwed into the floor). They were a sorry bunch, he decided, all the spirit leached out of them, somehow. They all looked tired and bored, flabby somehow, all with that interminable air of seediness that Unproductables all seemed to acquire, after a given period of time. They smelt none too clean either, he reflected, taking some small pride in the fact that that his clothes, shabby as they might be by now, were at least, recently washed.

A young woman approached their little group; tastefully attired, immaculately groomed, she smiled at them, revealing perfect teeth and dimples as she consulted her clipboard.

'Mr Evans!' she called. 'Come with me. Your Interview will be in Cubicle 2.'

Mr Evans got up to obey his summons, a large, bovine looking character who had, Darren thought, a definite weight problem. He wondered what this particular company would make of that. Surely, it would have to mean 'Intensive Help,' at least.

Darren found as the queue in front of him continued to dwindle, that his state of mind was not improving. Butterflies gnawed at his stomach, turning to waves of nausea, despite the fact that as far as he knew, they might not want to do much with him, at what was only his first in-depth interview.

The thought did not reassure him. He had heard too many tales about what was liable to happen at interviews such as these, and he suspected that these tales were far from exaggerated. He was not at all sure that he was necessarily sick and in need of help, his Unproductive status notwithstanding. Yet he knew that this might not prevent some of the excesses of A-Met's practises towards clients such as himself, even though his closest buddies had often told him that he was too much of a worrier when it came to matters such as these, paranoid even.

But as the old adage went, just because you are paranoid, doesn't mean they aren't out to get you. The new methods that A-Met had developed in order to deal with people such as himself, were reputed to be unorthodox, to say the least. Once the Employment Service had been liquidated, the door had been left open to its take-over by private companies such as Amalgamated Metropolitan. This in turn was owned by another multi-national giant, something to do with cigarettes, as far as Darren could remember. This latter was the body which had first taken the spirit of the times to its logical extremes, in this case, finally producing an unholy alliance between the New Right (formerly known as the New Left, confusing to Darren, at least) and Applied Radical Therapy, including Neo-Reichian techniques. This, amongst other measures designed to bring a revolving surplus of labour force into the sweatshops. The evils of inequality and underclass, were to be eradicated once and for all. Work, it was said, would set you free. We all created, and were responsible for our own reality. The New Age had dawned, hallelujah.

Darren could remember an old friend of his from school, who had been one of the dropouts of the mid-nineties, before the Clampdown. A wild character of bangles and dreadlocks, Darren knew that he had been targetted for Intensive Counselling, by a similar body to A-Met. Later, Darren had seen the former rebel again, working a seven-day week in a fast-food chain. The dreadlocks had been shorn, the bangles replaced by one of the 22 official Sate-approved haircuts and uniforms, his eyes.....

Darren shivered and held his arms protectively around himself, his body and his spirit, as yet so preciously inviolate. Those eyes in the end, had been so empty...'Mr Croft.'

Darren's attention snapped to being fully alert, as he realised with a sinking feeling that his time had come. The girl approached him with benevolent smile, which could have been totally for him. Like an air hostess, the total pro, he thought. So chocolate-box, yet you could sense the underlying steel...'You will be seen in Cubicle One, Mr Croft. Just follow me.' (that nice smile again.) 'You can easily get lost in this building, I know.'

Darren followed the girl obediently through a labyrinthine series of stairs and steps. This was symptomatic again, he thought. The government cutting back, by keeping functional, inner-city monstrosities such as these, like rotting teeth which somehow never got to be culled. We have the very best for you, Mr Croft. Yet, he mused, it was funny, how the micky-mouse ersatz jobs these schemes created, seemed to capitalise so little on the skills of their workforce and to be so inefficiently-run, yet somehow seemed to be so insidiously efficient that somehow or other, they always 'got' you in the end.

'Your first time isn't it,' said the girl, facing him briefly. Her eyes appeared to miss nothing.

Actually she was not a girl, Darren recognised. She could be in her forties - easily. The anti-wrinkle creams had done a lot of good on what was still an unlined face, but there was a muskiness about her, a solidity that only the gravity of Time could have lent. The hair was cut in an auburn mob square to her rather determined jaw, and Darren could see that underneath the clinical gown, she was wearing a black PVC suit; the recognised badge of those who considered themselves to be genitally adapted (which was sure to mean bad news for him, he thought). Darren looked at the name on the badge she wore on her lapel, which gave her name as Deanna Rudd. Somehow, the sinking feeling returned.

Finally, they reached their destination. Deanna Rudd produced a small key, and motioned Darren into the room, to behind a small screen, which masked a shower unit.

Just pop behind there and undress, Mr Croft. I'm going to get your notes, and will be with you in a minute.' Darren entered the room, then heard the key in the lock behind him.

Minutes later he had undressed, and found once again, that his nervousness was still with him. What was keeping the woman now? The floor underneath him was cold, and beginning to freeze the soles of his feet. A bar of strip lighting in the middle of the room, hummed incessantly over what looked like a dentist's chair in the middle of the room, its ruthless glare hurting his eyes.

Then footsteps came down the corridor, and he heard the sound of the key in the lock again. Deanna Rudd re-entered, bringing he saw, a younger woman with him. She introduced the latter to Darren, explaining that she was a student counsellor, and could she watch the interview.

Of course he gave his full consent, Darren said, hoping that this might display a co-operative attitude, and therefore count in his favour. Deanna Rudd then motioned him to lie on the couch, face up.

Darren Craft had been weighed and checked for all his vital signs once he had first made a claim for Sustenance once he had been made redundant from his last job, which meant that the interview could proceed to the preliminary examination. Deanna Rudd started to palpate his chest, abdomen and thighs with sensitive, but firm and practised hands. Most of the comments at this stage were directed at the student rather than at him, though he recognised some of the jargon.



'Depressed sternum. Weak musculature, with a general lack of tone in the torso. You will be required to focus on the oral type especially, during your finals, as these people more than any other character type, tend to expect the State to look after them.'

Thanks for that, thought Darren bitterly as the woman continued the examination. Her hands paused then, as they paid closer attention to his lower abdomen, closer to his groin. Deanna Rudd appeared to be deeply in thought, and had she not been a fully adjusted individual, Darren could have sworn that she was myopic.

'Genitals underdeveloped.' (This time, there was no mistaking the sneer in her voice.) And Deanna Rudd went on: 'But I detected an element of a masochistic sub-pattern in this character structure, too. Can you sit up please, Mr Croft?'

Darren sat on the couch, as Deanna Rudd put her hands on his shoulders, and brought her face closer to his. Her expression, Darren Croft noticed, was one of a smothering, benevolent concern.

'Well, Mr Croft,' she began. 'You have not worked for over a year now, and I know that you will naturally want to get well. Do you volunteer for immediate treatment?'

Of course, Mr Croft volunteered. It was in any case, he knew, a rhetorical question. He knew that were he to refuse, he would immediately lose all entitlement to benefit, and subsequently face destitution, and then, in extreme cases, liquidation. Of course he wanted to participate fully in his treatment, continue to claim Sustenance, and hopefully, eventually find work.

Deanna Rudd then ordered Darren to lie spread-eagled against the coach. The student, he noticed, had retreated, her notebook and pencil ready.

'Relax now,' she told Darren, as she ran her hands down his back, his pelvis. A warm feeling spread to his groin. Deanna Rudd turned to snap on a pair of latex gloves. The massage continued, a soothing oil being poured onto the small of his back, the crevice between his buttocks.

Suddenly, with a vicious thrust of her fist, Deanna Rudd forced three of her fingers into his rectum, causing a sudden twist of agony. With rising panic, he turned his head to face her as she stood astride him, her hand thrusting into protesting entrails. With her other hand, the weight of her body, she managed to effectively restrain him, as his body thrashed, and arched. She was clearly extraordinarily strong, realised Darren; she had to be working out, or was on steroids to be able to do that. No doubt, she had week oral types like himself for breakfast, every day.

Her eyes were glassy as she bent over him, only panting a little, with a fixed expression of anger and triumph. Her white coat was awry, revealing the well-fed and toned body underneath, filling out the tight body-suit underneath.

'I am going to make you WORK!' she declared. 'By the time you leave this building, you WILL be job-ready! You haven't applied for a job in the last six months...have you?

A distant part of Darren's brain remembered then. These particular counsellors believed that a refusal to work - or what they construed as a refusal to work - was often due to an actual, physical holding-back within the body. The body itself, had to be kick-started back into a state of productivity. Do your jobbies.

'I will purge you of your negativity!' enjoined the counsellor. She thankfully removed his hand then, but not before introducing something within, that felt cold and hard with the other hand. Deanna Rudd was going to give him an enema.

JESUS, he moaned through his teeth. Since when had THIS been part of routine practise at these bloody interviews? So much for being a paranoid worrier. Why hadn't his best friends warned him?

The trouble was, the truly sick thing about this, Darren realised, was that this body of his, this traitor of a body, was actually responding sexually to this vile treatment. Rather than going into deep shock at the trauma and the humiliation of it all, he was actually getting a kick out of this.

Unfortunately, Deanna Rudd could see what was happening too: this was clearly not the time to analyse his reactions. As she fastidiously removed her latex gloves in the basin, she turned and saw his erection.

She hit him in the abdomen, and he doubled up. Then she pulled his hair and slapped him, hard. There was considerable power in her punches too, Darren felt. He heard the student bite back a suppressed giggle.

'You are not supposed to feel any pleasure!' screamed the counsellor, 'You are here to develop a work ethic!'

Then, Darren Croft felt an uncontrollable spasm in his gut, and he knew the inevitable was about to happen. Somehow, he knew that a civilised retreat to a discreet water closet was not on the agenda, within this interview. As he lost control of his bowels, he wondered briefly if the stink in his own nostrils, smelt as foetid to Ms Rudd as it did to him. His mind idly pondered the logistics of issues to

do with the prevention of outbreaks of infectious diseases through interviews such as these, as his own effluvia dripped from his thighs to the tiled floor below.

He was not to wonder for long. Deanna Rudd motioned to the student, who vanished briefly, only to return with an old-fashioned mop and bowl, filled with hot water and disinfectant.

'On your knees, Mr Croft,' Deanna Rudd told him, 'Now you have an excellent opportunity in which to begin to take responsibility for the mess you insist on creating for yourself.'

Darren was beginning to learn some measure of humility. On his knees therefore, he assiduously scrubbed and cleaned, ever watchful of the double pair of black boots that were stationed just outside his reach. At one point, the student kicked him with considerable force, into his kidneys. Learning the tricks of the trade, Darren realised.

Surprisingly though, she was admonished by her superior.

'That's enough, Ms Renault. Mr Croft is learning his lessons, now.' Eventually, the counsellor asked Darren Croft to stand up. He did so, feeling vulnerable, all too aware of the uncleanness that still remained on the backs of his legs. The counsellor's hands were on his shoulders once more. The clinical coat properly reassembled now, the expression she wore now was full of wise, benevolent concern as her eyes met his, and held them.

'Well, Mr Croft,' she said. 'I have made considerable impact on your negativity during the course of this session with you, as I am sure you can see for yourself.'

'However....Darren steeled himself for what was to come next.'...Your sickness is a particularly stubborn one, and I would like to opportunity to be able to work on your particular shortcomings, a lot more extensively. I believe therefore, that you will benefit especially (now, Darren could almost hear the capitals) from Intensive Therapy. You will be required to attend one of our internal workshops for an Indefinite period of time. Our computer will notify you of your coming appointment, shortly. Failure to attend without due cause.....

'Oh no. NO!!!! Darren cringed within himself. So this was where being compliant and cooperative got him! Maybe he should have tried to resist Ms Rudd, or screamed for help. But really, he knew that neither move could possibly have helped, not with an organisation like A-Met. The entire place was doubtless bugged to the last inch, to secure against attacks on staff by desperate men and women, the entire place almost certainly, crawling with reinforcements, in case these interviews went wrong for the staff.

He cringed then, as a jet of steaming hot water caught him: the student was hosing him down. She was enjoying this too, he thought wretchedly, as he noted the mocking expression on her face.

Unfortunately, he realised, so again, too, was he. The warm feeling was returning to his groin, and he knew that he was fooling himself yet again: he WANTED this! Deanna Rudd really was an incredibly perceptive counsellor, he saw, she had certainly been, absolutely right about him. A masochistic pattern indeed, Wahey.

It was all incredibly humiliating of course and degrading : no sane man should have to go through this, in a so-called civilised society. In his mind's eye, he could hear the compassionate voices of the old-fashioned liberals and humanitarians of his heyday, those who had deplored the Rationalist ethos, that to be a Victim was Criminal.

Yet this humanitarian voice seemed to become puny in his own ears, then mocking. This was retrograde thinking indeed, and pathological, coming from one such as he. No - he had to transcend all this. Darren Croft was indeed a sick man, A-Met had demonstrated this to him thoroughly enough, this day. He needed help, and he had to get well, and now he was getting that help. After all, at least A-Met were prepared to take the time with him, which meant that at least they still considered him to be salvageable as an economic unit, otherwise they may well have started on his brain rather than his bum. Maybe therefore, they did NOT consider him to be mere fast-food food chain fodder (he hoped).

There could be no pain, no gain, Darren told himself yet again as yet another jet of scalding water hit him in the groin, teasing him. There really was, no alternative.

BOOK REVIEWS

Best New Horror - Edited Stephen Jones
Raven, £6.99



This book was originally sent me from BRV (RIP) to review, but my review was never used, so I would like to include a few words on this omnibus now.

It begins with a bit of a rant on the state of good horror literature in the present, which, like SF, is suffering because of the rise in cost of paper and the collapse of the Net Agreement in the UK. Net Result: more of a squeeze on some of the more interesting new talent around. There is a brilliant showcase of short stories here, though. It includes regular SS contributor Brian Stableford's *The Hunger and Ecstasy of Vampires*, which is actually a skit on HG Wells's *The Time Machine*, proving once again that SF and gothic are not the distant cousins you might suppose: very entertaining. *Extinctions in Paradise* by Brian Hodge is a piece of whimsy with serious intent on the plight of the child beggars in Brazil, whilst Dave Smed's *Survivor* is gothic in the tradition of *Dorian Grey*: *Survivor Guilt* might be a better term.

Meanwhile, *Scaring the Train* from Terry Dowling, is a long ride into territories of yet more old but unforgotten sins. Terry MacLeod, meanwhile, follows on with the Lovecraftian tradition of horror, with *Tirkiluk*. And Graham Masterton will surely petrify the reader with his tale *The Grey Madonna*.

We have some cautionary tales for the age of digital communications too! *More Tomorrow* by Michael Marshall Smith is about a malignant fate in store for a new kind of Net victim. Ramsey Campbell's contribution, *Down Under* on the other hand, had me chuckling with vindictive glee, as there is a sticky end in store for the owner of a mobile phone...

The editor collaborates with Kim Newman, to bring *Necropolis 1995*, which is a kind of a Who's Who of deaths within the world of horror, than of births.

Apologies go to the authors whose stories I have not covered here, but space constrains.

Vittorio the Vampire Anne Rice
Arrow, £5.99



Vittorio is a brand new vampire character created by the ever-prolific Anne Rice, and we are warned from the

beginning that his story does not in any way touch on any of the other luminaries who fill the pages of the previous chronicles.

Vittorio the Vampire is not surprisingly set in Italy and begins in Medieval times, with the innocent, happy childhood of an innocent who is forced to come to terms with the dark side of life too soon. This happens through the typical Ricean path for all her anti-heroes: here, Vittorio's dark initiation comes through the massacre of his entire family, and our boy is naturally impelled on a quest to avenge them. Tough job if the killers happen to be undead.

Actually, Vittorio's story bears strong parallels with that of Armand, which comes before this one; that too is set in Italy, and presents us with a boy whose idyllic adolescence is similarly cut short. By there never was much love present in any of Anne Rice's novels: always the exquisite sense of beauty, and its subsequent betrayal, usually through death of course, or through a fate worse than death.

Unlike in previous novels, the vampires have a stronger involvement with the body politic of mortal life: the village where, for example, the vampires eradicate all those who are unsound in limb, and where everyone is unnaturally good. Is this vampire as metaphor for mafioso, fascist, or what?

It is all very readable, Anne Rice has lost none of her edge as a story-teller, her stories seem to work better on a smaller stage. It is all very much of a morality-tale too, where at the end Vittorio says 'pray that it never takes slaughter or a rape to see the light around you.' Quite. Amen.

Stainless Todd Grimson Quartet £9.00

This is the second copy of Stainless I have received from someone who knows my tastes, and I have to admit, this Quartet pressing is most impressive. You pays the price for that, of course.

Written is street slang all the way through, which I have to admit I found a little irritating at times, Stainless follows the adventures of the somewhat unprepossessing Keith, a junkie with maimed hands. Keith has shackled up with Justine, who looks twenty-five, but is actually a vampire who has lasted for several centuries. Justine has a poor memory, which allows the author to keep her character superficial - indeed typical of most of the low-life, small-time gangsters, druggies and misfits who are the mainstay for the furnishing of the novel.

Vampires being vampires do, however, attract lots of history and lots of trouble, so it is inevitable that old enemies surface. A plot is thus created, complete with tortured victims and dungeons and Pulp Fiction-type shoot-outs with lots of violence. And no happy ending for the lost.

You might like this if you prefer Generation X to Anne Rice, but the characters within were all a little too throw-away for my liking, along with the style as a whole.

INTERVIEW WITH PENITENT

Penitent is the brainchild of Norway-based Karsten Hamre, and features a unique blend of neo-classical dark folk music. Here, he kindly answers the questions I put to him for the benefit of Seventh Seal readers. Also, check out my review of his most recent album, Roses of Chaos Spawned, in the Poison Quill Reviews section.



What has been happening to you recently? There seems to be a change to a much stronger-sounding style than with your first albums.

I really don't know what to say, beside the obvious, which is that the music is the result of a natural development. Another aspect is that by time one also get more studio experience and thereby are capable of producing an album with a richer and fuller sound, but first and foremost it's evolution.

There also seem to be more contributors, especially within the vocals department. Are these contributors friends, or purely professional collaborators?

The vocalists that has been contributing with their voices on the album is friends and people I know personally.

Which label do you work with now, and what response overall have you had to your new material?

For this album, "Roses by Chaos Spawned", and the newly-recorded "Maestro Beethoven" I have been working with Memento Mori, a sub-label of Dark Vinyl Records. The response on "Roses by Chaos Spawned" has been very good and it pleases me to hear that people really enjoy the album. Though of course one can't please

everyone.

I have asked this before, but this time you can give your answers to the Seventh Seal (a prior live interview with Karten is available from the Hungarian-speaking zine, Tajtekos Lapok - ed.) - do you think there is a depressive element in the Norwegian psyche? Whence the melancholy in all your work?

If there is more depression and melancholy in the Norwegian psyche than others I do not know for sure, maybe there is more of it among people who live here, up north. Then not only in Norway but in the Nordic countries. That could be explained as a result of the long winters and how the seasons are here. In particular I find the autumn to be quite an inspiring season, and I guess that's where some of the melancholy comes from.

Which musicians do you most admire? Which ones would you say inspire your music most?

I would say I admire musicians like Mr. Doctor of Devil Doll as well as the grand masters of classical music. The ones that inspire me the most are classical composers such as Beethoven, Mozart, Grieg, Wagner, Orff etc and composers of film scores.

Favourite books and films?

I would have to include "American Psycho" among my favourite books, and I also enjoy reading the books by Anne Rice as well as Marion Zimmer Bradley's "Mists of Avalon", "Lady of Avalon" and the "forest House" are

among the most memorable books I have read throughout the years. My favourite films would be "True Romance", "Wild At Heart", "The Crow" (the first one), "Blue Velvet", "Fire Walk With Me", "Lost Highway", "Interview With a Vampire", "Blade", "Matrix" and "Man Bites Dog".

Do you believe in any kind of life after death?

Well, I do believe in some sort of afterlife, but as with everything else one cannot know for sure what that will be like. As I believe in the existence of the soul I believe we continue after our earthly lives are ended. This based on the soul and that the soul is energy, and as we know energy does not cease to exist, it merely changes form. Though for me it is not important to dwell with this, or focus on life after death, as for me it's more important that I have a life before death.

Are you still planning to travel again in the Autumn, where to, and why?

If I can manage to travel, depending on how it will go together with the new job I'm to start in mid august (as webdesigner/webmaster), I will. Nevertheless, I'm having some discussions regarding some possible live shows with Penitent, and also Arcane Art, but it's too early to say when and where those will take place. Could be anywhere really.

What is the music scene like in Norway, places to go and so on?

There are some good venues in Norway, even a couple here in my hometown Stavanger. As

for the music scene it's hard to say how that is as I don't really pay too much attention to what's happening here in Norway. Surely there are great bands coming from here, but there's not really a big market for darkwave and related music here. One has to go to other places in Europe to find the great audiences for such music. Here it's mostly pop, rock oriented music that gets the most attention, as well as of course black metal and related music and techno.

Are there still a lot of heavy-duty Satanist bands in Scandinavia?

That I would guess there are, not so much mixed with music as before though, but they are still around.

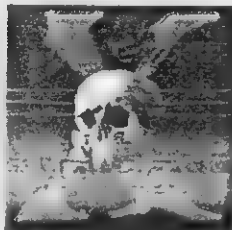
Thanks very much for answering my questions!

If you would like more information about Penitent, then check Dark Records at PO Box 1221 90539 Echthenthal Germany, email darkvinyl@t-online.de

Poison Quill Reviews

MONACO X: Gezeiten

Dist: Nova Media/USA:Metropolis
Promoted: Focusion: iris@focusion.de



According the blurb, Monaco X is 'one of the oldest German Electro-acts around, so it is not surprising that they should capitalise on the current popularity of electro music. This one has been produced by Joerg Hutner, who is also responsible for the songs of Dorsetshore, Skorbut as well as the programming etc of Dreadful Shadows and Evereve.

Gezeiten in fact, does seem to exemplify for me the best of what Electro could be, though I am no great fan of electro. This album brings nine strong compositions consisting of strong, catchy rhythms designed to get the laziest of people onto the dance floor, with enough aggression in both percussion and vocals (do I occasionally detect a little industrial-style distortion to the vocals, and the odd touch of sampling here and there?) not to allow it to become bland. Neither is it too stuck in the eighties; I have already mentioned the industrial edge that makes itself felt, and there are also plenty of 90's style techno-ey effects, making what was once meant to be futuristic, contemporary still.

Definitely an accomplished album, and recommended to all you electro-heads out there.

LIMBO: Conspiratorium: The Ice Line

Energeia: energeia@tiscalinet.it

Meanwhile, Energeia have brought out another important electro project, this time a sort of a collaboration between the very busy Gianluca Bekuzzi, who runs Limbo from Italy as well as Kirlian Camera. On this new release you get 14 previously unreleased songs where bands with as varied names as Templebeat, Runes Order, Atrax Morgue and Sigillum S have worked alongside Limbo to bring you this sampler of what is available within the Italian electro scene.

The end result is an album full of dancefloor songs, which vary in mod from low-key industrial to lushly ambient. I would not say that the overall mood is cold exactly, as the sleeve might suggest, but it is certainly rather distant and impersonal. The sort of stuff a DJ might play between 2 and 4 in the morning, when the nightclub is going for the burn.

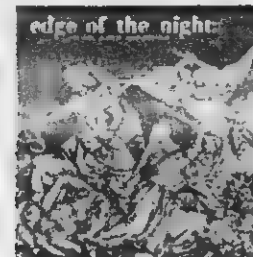
Individual favourites must come down to personal taste this time, and whilst nothing here is out of keeping with the overall mood, there are considerable variations within of individual style. Some of it seemed a little bland for me, whilst tracks such as Hidden Matrix, Deep Sleep were that little more relentless or had more energy, whilst track 7, Dialogue appealed more, because there was more melody, and therefore atmosphere for me.

Either way, Limbo has certainly produced a very smooth album of electro sounds, so there should be plenty to choose from this Summer as far as these sounds go.

EDGE OF THE NIGHT:

RussianGothic Compilation

<http://www.gothic.ru> coroner@gothic.ru



Now is your chance to be introduced to what is available from the goth scene in Russia. And I promise you, that you won't be disappointed with what you can hear on this compilation, particularly if you like the more ambient/atmospheric style of goth.

It kicks off with Snow River, by Canonis, and features ethereal female vocals, offset against guitars of a rather Asiatic feel.

Princess Mee by Caprice follows; this band hails from Moscow, and they are avowed Tolkein nuts. This is romantic, as you might expect, with somewhat Classical touches. It has a fairy-tale Prokofiev feel to my ears, and it comes this time with operatic female vocals. Next comes the rather wistful, ambient Elegy, from Romowe Rikoito, from Kaliningrad. This is for lost lovers to moon about to.

It is followed by Falling into the Night, from a band also from Kaliningrad, called No Man's Land. This is somewhat more gothy in style than are the previous tracks, or at least is somewhat Depeche-

Modish. It seems a little bland in comparison to the next track Playroom, from Moscovites Neutral. Here are glutinous, Eldritch vocals (and very Russian-sounding) but set against melodic Nephilim-esque guitars, with that elusive Estern edge again.

Dvar, who come next, are mystery-mongers, occultists according to the blurb I was sent, 'with an unknown location.' Anyway, their offering, Taai Liira, presents an experimental sound of howling vocals, chanting and chuckling against urgent background furniture. I can just hear the savage Steppes in this, though I also suspect that this could be a pretentious lot. Next comes Damse's Dream, and this was reckoned to be Moscow's answer to Portishead, by someone to whom I played this. Elegy for rhythm-box features chanting too, from a female vocalist. Musky, disturbing, this has to be one of the darker jewels from this gift box of as-yet unknown talent. Phantom Bertha from St Petersburg come next, and with Igri Natur Renovaur Integra, offer a straight-down-the-line track of traditional Sisters-style goth. Not bad, though.

The mood here is very DCD: Cloud of Dreams by Dreams is an ethereal hymn, with angelic soprano vocals. This could be one for Enya/Clannad fans too. Cyclothymia, however, with Paradise X, is definitely far more electro in style: Moscovites, and definitely urban, though still somewhat ethereal. Another St Petersburg band follows: Lunophobia, with Under the Snow. This is pleasant enough in its way, though a bit twee by my tastes. There is nothing poppy about Djembe, however, with Tourdion: this comes, and is intended to sound as though it comes from, straight from the Middle Ages: it is a folky, dancy

instrumental. *This*, were there vocals, could be Russia's answer to Ataraxia.

There must be something about Kalininograd, as Kratong hail from there too. Echoes of Sinking Ships is a slow, wistful track, featuring low-key strings as well as guitars; just as you thought this was going to degenerate into 'Streets of London' sentimentality, though, this hits you with sinister chuckling and mutterings at strategic moments. The bleak mood here carries on into the next track, December of Times, by Moon Far Away. This lot comes from Arkhangelsk, which, I have reliably been told, is a cold place. This is certainly wintry, with lost vocals, opening with bells that recall Holst's Saturn track: overall, pretty atmospheric. TNT Art deliver the penultimate track, Better than You. This has a vaguely Missionish feel, with husky male vocals, delivered in English; it is an engaging track, and seems to have reasonable commercial potential. Finally, we have Cisefinitum, with De Profondis. This is a longish instrumental, though with mere hints in the background of Enigma-style Gregorian samplings. The mood, however, is a long way from that of Enigma, though: this is melancholy, solemn in pace and in mood: a fitting conclusion.

There are some very intriguing new discoveries awaiting you on this album. The standard of musicianship is high overall on this album, too, so whilst there are some inevitable echoes besdit cloning of old idols discernible on one or two of the tracks here, there is much that is new and mysterious on this compilation from this large and relatively unknown and isolated part of the world, too.

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

5

Energeia

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Another review of another compilation follows, this time featuring a showcase of what is new in Italy. At least, none of the band names here, were previously known to me.

Ashram kicks off with Spirit of the Rising Moon, bringing wistful, melancholy vocals set against gentle piano and violins. The Land Under the Waves with Gothica is a DCD-style hymn, angelic vocals, as you would expect, set against sea sounds. It is followed by Vidi Aquam and features the sort of low-key industriality more typical of Die Form or Love Is Colder than Death during their blander, less sublime moments. It did not really appeal to me, though it might to you. Next, Nova brings us Icaro which also have a very DCD feel: warm, emotional, it is delivered with vocals which could be an adult version of Aled Jones.

A Penitent-style spoken soliloquy follows, though in Italian, not Norwegian. With Estel, Albireon gives us a slow, introspective ballad against gentle strings. Lupercalia, which comes next with Normandia, is very Medieval in feel, with sombre bells promising a bit

of a dirge to begin with. Is this band to be Italy's answer to Sopor Aeternus?

The next track, by Anima in Fiamme with Leratica Buoi, has a medieval feel too, though this I much more sedate and courtly in feel. This band seems to have either classical training, which is reflected in the orchestral arrangements of the violins.

The eight track, La Farfalla, or The Butterfly by Damma, seemed really weird, and something of an overlong dirge too to me at first, though perversely it has grown on me. 'Messing about on the River' of all things is what first came to mind, though in the end, the chords also reminded me strongly of Bela Lugosi's Dead. That is probably no accident. After this, comes Menarca with La Tempesta sul Lago, featuring glutinous males vocals against minimal instrumentals. It is clear that Immortality has no intention of lightening up much on this selection; Leutha, coming next with Second Wind, brings us another very melancholy dirge, with distorted, underwatery effects. Maybe these want to be Italy's answer to Goethe's Erben. More low-key industriality follows with Real Skin, by Cypher Vibes; once again, for me this was a little bland.

Meanwhile, Kluster Cold bring with a ballad, Existence, with the most traditional-sounding gothy guitars I have heard yet on this compilation; a little wistful, but pleasant all the same. Next comes House of Dolls, with A Heaven in Dreams. This features Nephilimesque guitars, though the frequent changes in pace and the vocals reminded me a lot of their fellow countrymen, Trees. Then at last! We get a change of pace finally with the penultimate track, Difference. Off Shadows comes with dirty '80's guitars, all the atmosphere of the likes of Danse Society or Sex Gang Children,

etc. Good stuff. Finally, the album closes with To be Me, by Mystery Harbour. More Neph-type strumming with a 'big' sound, building up more and more atmosphere. This seems to be from what may well prove to be a promising new discovery, too.

Most of the material here is very well matched with everything else, and I can see this album appealing to anyone who prefers the more romantic, ambient side of what could loosely be called either goth or dark wave. I do think that the occasional other faster-paced track could have lifted this compilation just a little. Nevertheless, this too is still an excellent collection of new material and introduction to what is new in Italy.

PASSION PLAY - Stress Fractures

PO Box 1238 Oxford OX2 8YP UK

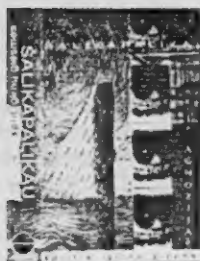
Pplay@globalnet.co.uk

Stress Fractures is I believe, Passion Play's debut. It opens with In Season, which straightaway establishes the overall mood of the album - romantic and melancholy. This is achieved through the gentle bass strumming and the sensitive, wistful vocals of Justin Stephenson. Elsewhere, acoustics help create the intimate atmosphere, whilst guitars elsewhere, add a softly melodic Nephilimesque edge. This for example, is most noticeable on the fifth, eighth and tenth tracks. Down to You and The Lesser One do, of course, appear on the first demo tape putout by Passion Play, and I liked those tracks then. Soft goth at its best, that is, tinged by indie/soft metal influences: think for example, Swan of Avon, Rose of Avalanche, The Gallery. As though Mr Stephenson does not appear to wish to labelled as too hippyish or wimpy, however, there are tracks delivered with rather more

aggression and speed. In Demon Eyes for example, Linda Lloyd takes over the helm with aggressive, flat Siouxi-style vocals; the seventh, ninth and eleventh tracks are fast-paced enough to make it to the dancefloor. I do hope Passion Play don't go so much in the direction of the fourth track, Name No Names; this to me at least was irritatingly strident.

There is a sense that Passion Play are still finding themselves, and yes in places, Stress Fractures was a little derivative. However, this is after all a debut, and there is still much here that is very capable of pleasing, and it is a pleasant listen, too.

Salik Paliku - split girnu giesmes
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 5412 Siauliai
 email ugnies@takas.lt
 LITHUANIA



This cassette tape, sent to me from darkest Lithuania, brings a set of highly arty compositions of white industrial noise. Not in the sense of deploying teeth-grinding howlback, but of using percussion instruments, samples from machines in factories, or anything that comes to hand, in order to make a statement.

And it does. This is grim, hideous, alienating, and says a lot about how white noise in general, noise pollution

from the 20th Century onwards, can itself create its own sense of madness.

It is cleverly done though (and the comments above are meant in no way to denigrate the music) and the occasional use of such things as recognisable real instruments in places such as guitars, tells us that Darius, whose project this is, is no slouch as a musician. Nevertheless, there is a sense that it may well be more fun to actually create a cassette like this, rather than have to listen to it: as I have said, you have to appreciate this for its art, rather than because it is music.

In fact, Darius is no mean artist, either; he sent me photographic compositions of various overlaid exposures, and the sleeve cover, as you can see here, contains fine Outsider-type compositions within the tradition of Debuffet.

Darius reputedly, also has a cassette with more gothy material available, so for that too, it may be worth dropping him a line.

ATTRITION - The Hand that Feeds
 Released: Matrix Cube abornweg 19
 64807 dieburg germany email
info@trisol.de



What a brilliant surprise to get this at the 11th Hour! Your very own Poison Quill did of course, interview Attrition in SS1. The Hand that Feeds is a double CD, and as such is a retrospective of everything Attrition have achieved in their long

career to date. On the first side is a series of remixes, including those of Acid Tongue and Waste Not...want more, which appeared on the now defunct UK-based BRV compilations.

The original Acid Tongue also appears in its original form on the twin to the first CD here.

You also get the club hit 'Agirl called Harmony' here, as well as remixes by In the Nursery, Chris N Cosey and Regerator, as well as, reputedly, others. So this is something of a collaborative project, too.

As a retrospective, this double album presents the different stylistic phases within Attrition's history. Pust-punk there is, though more ska-tinged to my ear circa Specials than goth, with Shrinkwrap or Whire Men Talk; there is much that is dance-techno with the likes of Cold Genius and Acid Tongue (in both versions presented here); Waste Not Want Not recalls the operatic industrial of Die Form, only with a lot more power; the Classical edge of the former is extended through the masterpiece, A girl called Harmony. The last few tracks on the second album are far more introspective, ambient in flavour.

This shows the strengths of Attrition in seamlessly bridging so many different genres of music whilst not being totally affiliated to any one, whether or not techno, industrial, electro or goth. It is all totally compulsive, and delivered with total class. As such, this is an excellent introduction to what Attrition are about, and will almost certainly make you wish to investigate further.

PENITENT - Roses by Chaos
Spawned

Dist. Dark Vinyl Records PO Box
1221 905539 Eckental Germany
 Email: DARKVINYL@ONLINE.DE

Karsten Hamre kindly sent me the fruit of his latest project recently, and in this latest Penitent album, he presents us with yet more of his particular brand of sombre, melancholic dark music.

The material is stronger I would say than what is available on the first album I reviewed for SS1. This has more drama, even pomp in places, and is less oppressive. Possibly this is because there is a lot more external output, in the form of Andrew Goldline's guttural vocals (very much in that glutinous, vomiting style that I guess you can only love or hate and, in true Penitent form, spoken rather than sung) as well as with the female vocals of guest singer Ellen White. The latter especially does give a nicely sublime touch on the rare occasion that they are used, and detracts from the austerity that is apparent on the mood of the album elsewhere.

This impression of austerity comes from the use of the organ on the fourth track especially, or from whatever instrument Karsten uses to simulate the organ. Either way, it certainly brings to mind a kind of a churchy Puritan coolness of the soul. One for fans of early Lacrimosa, maybe?

Elsewhere, everything is simply sombre and of a monotone palette, because everything seems to be in a lower octave, from vocals to percussion and to piano. This all has to be fitting of course, for a track titled Ancient Despair, though the overall effect again is of a bruised sadness, rather than of the brutal numbness of out-and-out depression.

Not so with the lyrics though, which must definitely earn the whole CD this latter diagnosis. What else are we to make, for example, of tracks about the 'apathy of my soul' or of 'this veil of sorrow which is the emblem of my death.' Only the love of a good woman can help him, of course: 'only you can turn my sadness into joy.'

There is certainly a classical edge to much of the material here, and there may be elements on this album that would appeal a lot to aficionados of dark folk also. One thing not present on this album, and which was on the first, is the way the last two tracks build up into a definite finale. In comparison, *Roses by Chaos Spawned* seemed a lot more disjointed towards the end, and therefore seems to end less satisfactorily.

It is still all rather sombre stuff overall, and in places also seems to me to persevere somewhat with the interludes of classicist strings, especially on the last track, though this will no doubt appeal strongly to those who already like their music this way.

Once again, Karsten Hamre brings the full arsenal of his talents to bear on this album: the photography on the sleeve cover is all his work, also.

INTERVIEW WITH MANTRA



Poison Quill originally contributed the following article to the Hungarian-speaking zine, Tajtekos Lapok. It was decided however, to make the original English version available here, for Seventh Seal readers. Mantra have a refreshingly uncompromising approach to their work, which is in contrast to much of what is available to the UK at the moment, and it is Simon who kindly answers my questions here.

OK, firstly: can you tell me a little more about your new release, and in your opinion, how has it developed in style from your first album?

Every Defect was recorded about 18 months after our first album 'Painted Red'. During the interim period Mantra became much more focussed on what we wanted to achieve musically. Our first album has been acclaimed for being 'brave' - we are very proud of this, but looking back on how it was put together we have learned so much since then. Painted Red relied very much on power - powerful chords and huge slabs of music to try and create the intensity and passion we wanted. Every Defect achieves the same results using less instead of more. This time round we arranged songs more carefully allowing the voice, for example, to come through more. We also used live percussion and strings which give the songs a much more organic and fluid feel - this has improved them no end.

Where in the UK are you based? Do identify much with the UK goth scene?

Mantra are based in Manchester in the North West of England although we live nearly 30 miles apart. Apart from our record label, we have very little in common with the 'goth' scene - however, we are very appreciative of all the support we have had from fans in this genre. We have played with some 'goth' (Faith and the Muse, Inkubus, Clan of Xymox etc.) bands to promote the album and the reception we have had has been very positive. Most of our reviews comment on how we appear to be misplaced and fail to sit comfortably in the 'goth' category. We suppose the link comes because the music is essentially 'dark' - however, we think that's where the comparison ends. We don't consider ourselves to be a goth band. We don't make music according to a pre-designed formula and we certainly don't use image to cover up any musical inadequacies.

Do you think that goth is still a valid artistic genre within which to work?

It depends what your definition of 'goth' is. If you apply the notion of making music which is dark and sensual - then yes, there are many successful goth musicians - Portishead, Tricky for

example. However, if you apply the ghosts, ghouls and vampire nonsense - No. Certainly in the UK our link to this genre, although providing us with audiences, has prevented us from getting fair press and publicity. Quite simply, it is not taken seriously. This is mainly because the genre produces nothing which is innovative or fresh. People who get involved in the goth club whether musician or audience leave themselves open to ridicule because they value image over good quality music. And the majority of goth music we hear nowadays seems to be a carbon copy of music we used to hear in the mid 80's with little or no development which we view as unproductive and futile.

Have you travelled much abroad?

Unfortunately all of us work full time to fund Mantra and it is very difficult to organise a trip abroad. It is something all of us would love to do and we remain open to any offers of a tour. We get full audiences in London but we would love to tour abroad, perhaps Germany or America

When was Mantra first formed, and how did you get to know each other? Has your line-up changed at all, and if so, how?

Mantra first got together in 1989 for a swift, fruitless and hence aborted attempt at playing music. Simon and Yvonne were both studying at this time and money was tight. We met up with Phil again, by chance at a Swans concert in Sheffield. Our passion for powerful and emotive music had not waned so we decided to give the band another go. Although all three of us were working full time, we had a little more money and patience so Mantra began life in about 1995. We have experimented with different line ups although the core has always remained the same. At one point we had two bass players, Yvonne played guitar and Phil was vocalist - this didn't last too long!!

What did you set out to do with your band and who are your main icons and idols?

Our philosophy has always remained the same. We want to create music which is accessible to anyone who looks for more than 'throwaway tunes'. We write highly emotive and passionate songs designed to move people. We believe that music should effect the listener, whether it makes them deliriously happy or hopelessly sad. Each of our songs is written to reach out and knock your feet from under you. This philosophy is mirrored in the sounds we incorporate - strings and acoustic instruments play an important part as they are so evocative. Simon uses extreme guitar sonics which take our music away from the 'safe' and towards the very edge. We also want to create this intensity live and bring back the art of live performance. The people we admire musically are Michael Gira, Nick Cave, Einstürzende Neubauten, Arvo Part, Tricky etc.

Do you hold to any particular philosophy or religion?

We are not religious.

If there were something in the world that you could change, then what would you most like to be able to change?

It would be nice to eliminate everybody in our societies who take so much and give nothing back.

What messages do you have for your fans?

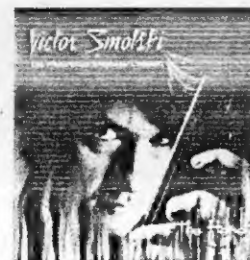
We would very sincerely like to thank the people who support us, it is a great 'buzz' to hear from people all over the world who understand, appreciate and enjoy our music. Contact mantra@akoluthic.com Thanks very much, and look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks very much for answering my questions

METAL REVIEWS

In future, editorial policy will be to accept any contributions in whichever language they are sent, and they will be translated according to the best of my own abilities, or that of my computer. Meanwhile, welcome aboard to Mezey Gábor, who has kindly reviewed the following two albums for this section.

Victor Smolski - The Heretic
Dist.focusion, email: iris@focusion.de



A 'The Heretic' Smolski első szólóalbuma. Fehér oroszországi született, zenészsaládból. Apja professzor a Fehér-rossz zeneakadémián. Viktor már 6 éves korában zongorán és iseltán játszik, majd 1989-ben diplomázik Minszben jazz-nak gitár szakon. (Nos). Nos, a lemez már a lemez már az első hallása sokkal hatású, bár többször meg kell hallgatnia az embernek ha az igazi zenei üzenetet akarja megérteni. Smolski zenéjét inspiráló ereje a legsötétebb középkor - vagy talán a pokol - és boszorkányperek időszakában latszik. Az anyag leghízezsabb része az első három téma - 'Baptism of Fire' - 'The Testimony' - 'Hex of the Strings' - és ebből is a 'Testimony' mely sötét ritmusával az eleven való eléggést teszi le. A nő sikolyok kálusok isok tovább feszítik a hangulatot, továbbba Smolski metal gitártémak. Fő témák a boszorkánykultusz, régi elteledett istenek, págányhábonik. A zenei kisévet is említésre méltó: 70 togú szimfonikus zenekar játszik, mintha valami örült zenészerőt hallgatnánk. De ezek mellett meglepően jól komponálja össze a klasszikus zenét a modern rockzenével.

Talán az egyik legfurcsább alkotás amit mostanáság hallottam. Aki megérti és wérez erre a szememénre, annak nem kis örömet fog okozni Smolski nem mindennapi alkotása.

The Heretic is Smolski's first solo album. He was born in White Russia, into a musical background. His father is professor of the White Russian Music Academy. Victor could already play the piano and ? at the age of six, then in 1989 he gained a degree specialising in jazz guitar, in Minsk. Well, the record already makes a strong impression on first listen, although you really have to listen to it a lot more times if you want to understand the real message of the music: the inspiration behind Smolski's music is derived from the darkest Middle Ages - or perhaps from Hell - and it seems to from the times of the Witch Trials. The material's most drawn-out pieces consist of the first three themes: Baptism of Fire, The Testimony and Hex of the Strings - and also from these, Testimony, which with its dark rhythms, bears witness to being burnt alive. The women's screams which are played out add further to the tension of the atmosphere, further still through the guitar interludes of Smolski.

The main themes are about the cult of witchcraft, old forgotten gods and pagan wars. Regarding what accompanies the music, it is worth mentioning that a 70-strong symphonic orchestra is playing, as if some insane composer were listening. Yet beside this, there is a surprisingly good compatibility between the classical elements and the modern components. Perhaps this is one of the strangest compositions I have heard recently. Whoever understands and enjoys this kind of thing, will derive no

small pleasure from Victor Smolski's not commonplace oeuvre.
Mezey Gábor

**Love Like Blood - Enslaved and
Condemned
Hall of Sermon
CH - 4310 Rheinfelden
<http://www.hall-of-sermon-de>**

A LLB a Német Gothic-rock nagyapai 12 éves fennállásuk történetében új albummal jelentkeztek 'Enslaved and Condemned.' A lemez munkálatai 2 teljes hetet vett igénybe. Éjjel-nappal dolgoztak a fiúk London mellett egy 400 éves kastélyban berendezett stúdióban. A változás már a borított kézben tartva tapasztaltan. Az előző lemezeket a német SPV adta ki. A 'Snakekiller' és az új albumot az avantgarde zenék körében hangzatosabb nevű Hall of Sermon puplizálta. Nos, végighallgatva a lemezt, még a 'Snakekiller'-nél is erősebb, diimikusabb alkotás lett a végeredmény. Elhagyták a régebbi lemezek hangzóságát, ami, ha a szívünkre tesszük a kezünket, nem volt túl eredeti. Kemény de túlbemáshzó, sőt dupla lábgépes obbtémák övezik az új megszólalást. A lemeznek egyébként az a Simon Efemey volt a producere, aki többek között a Paradise Lost, Pantera, és az Amorphis zenekarokkal dolgozott együtt. Így érthető az enyhén Paradise Lostot idéző hangzás. Azért a jó öreg Fields of the Nephilim is ott kísért a riffek között ok már nem olyan meghatározásán mint régebben. Már a kedvenc dalaim is megszülettek: Love Kills, Dying Nation, The River, Violation and Bleeding. Egy feldolgozás /7 Seconds/ és a 80's években született teljesen más stílusban. De ragyogóan, sikerült a munka, jól megér a többi LLB szeremény között. Az Enslaved and Condemned mindenképpen egy jó

hangású, atmoszférius dark-metal album. Aki ezt a stílust szereti annak mindenképpen ajánlom a LLB. Nem mendennapi alkotását.

With a 12-year history since they were first found, the grandfathers of gothic rock Love Like Blood, have released a new album: 'Enslaved and Condemned. The making of the album was completed within the space of two weeks of non-stop work.

Changes can already be discerned within the sleeve cover. The previous records were released via the German SPV; the new album and the penultimate Snakekiller, however, comes under the umbrella of the avant-garde music coming from the more high-sounding named Hall of Sermon. LLB have left the sound of their earlier material behind, which let's admit with hand over heart, was not all that original. The new sound and subject matter is hard but full of pomp, indeed double-edged percussion rhythms give their signature to their new style. Simon Blemey, who has also worked with such bands as Paradise Lost, Pantera and Amorphis, produced this album. It is therefore possible to faintly discern the trademark Paradise Lost sound. However, as the good old Fields of the Nephilim also haunt between the riffs, this is less marked than before.

These songs have already grown on me as my favourites: Cave Kills, Dying Nation, The River, Violation and Bleeding. There is one 80's cover, 7 Seconds, which is here conceived in a totally different style.

Still, overall this is an oeuvre of glittering success, and they have certainly surpassed anything they have done so far. Enslaved and Condemned is without question, good sounding and atmospheric dark-metal album. If you like this style, I recommend it to you with no reservations. This is something special.